

B O R O U G H O F B E C C L E S

A N N U A L R E P O R T

FOR THE YEAR 1923

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

(Charles Rees Smith. M.B., B.S., D.P.H.)

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The Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors of
The Borough of Beccles.

Sir and Gentlemen,

I beg to lay before you the Annual Report for
1923.

General Statistics

Area in Acres	...	...	...	...	...	...	2,037
Estimated Population	...	...	...	...	...	...	7,071
Number of Inhabited Houses (1921)	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,771
Number of Families (1921)	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,773
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	...	...	£30,641
Penny Rate	...	...	...	...	...	...	£130

Vital Statistics

Births	...	...	...	104	(Legitimate	M. 48	F. 50
					(Illegitimate	2	4
Birth Rate per 1,000	-			14.7			
Deaths	...	...	...	...	...	M. 32	F. 39
Death Rate for 1,000	.	...	...	...	...	11.17	
Number of Women dying in childbirth					...		0.
Deaths of Infants under One Year - 4					(Legitimate	4	
					(Illegitimate	0	
Infantile Mortality	...	...	...	...	30 per 1,000 Births		
Rate for England and Wales	)	...	...		Birth	19.7	
					Death	11.6	
					Infantile Mortality	69.	
Deaths from Measles	...	...	...	...	...		0
Deaths from Whooping Cough		0
Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 Years of Age)		0



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Notifiable Diseases

				<u>Cases Notified</u>	<u>Deaths</u>
Diphtheria	0	0
Scarlet Fever	21	0
Enteric Fever	...	...	...	1	0
Erysipelas	...	...	...	2	0
Tuberculosis (Pulmonary)	...		{ M	10	4
			{ F	4	3
Tuberculosis (Non-Pulmonary)	...		{ M	1	0
			{ F	2	1

Summary of Nursing and Hospital Arrangements

The Beccles Nursing Institute provides general and maternity nursing and health visiting.

The Staff are also responsible for the visiting and after care of tuberculosis cases.

The War Memorial Hospital has been completed and opened during the year. It provides accomodation for 8 male and 8 female patients in the general wards, for 3 children in one ward and for 2 patients in 2 private wards.

Ambulance facilities are provided by the Red Cross. The charge made is one shilling per mile reckoned from the Town Hall, Beccles. The Motor Ambulance is kept at Lowestoft, but is available at short notice when summoned by telephone.

Maternity and Child Welfare

A Clinic is held every Thursday afternoon at the Red Triangle Hut at 2.30. The work is carried on by a grant from the County Council and is assisted by subscriptions from a few friends interested in the work.

The attendance has steadily increased during the year.

	<u>1922</u>	<u>1923</u>
Average Weekly Attendance ...	29	42
New cases during the year ...	24	51

Isolation of Infectious Fevers

The Isolation Hospital is situate on the low lying ground on the outskirts of the Town. It was repaired and disinfected during 1923 at a cost of about £100.

The Hospital has not been used during the year, as the Council do not wish it to be opened except in the event of a serious epidemic. During the year 21 cases of Scarlet Fever were notified to me. This large number of cases is due to the fact that Scarlet Fever is often so mild as to escape recognition. On several occasions I have been asked to see School Children in whom the Teacher has noticed peeling on the hands. On careful enquiry these children are found to be suffering from a mild attack of scarlet fever. The second factor in the spread of this infection is the impossibility of proper home isolation under the existing conditions of housing.

The Council wish the cases of Scarlet Fever treated by home isolation as far as that is possible and secondly by the Eucalyptical treatment. No provision is made for cases occurring where food is prepared for sale or in two roomed houses where isolation is impossible. The Council are pinning their faith to Eucalyptical treatment which in no single instance that has come under my notice has been carried out according to the instruction of the one and only well known Fever Specialist who has advocated this method. In the Hospitals of the Metropolitan Asylums Board this form of treatment was tried and abandoned as unsound many years ago.

There is little prospect of any abatement in the incidence of Scarlet Fever until some more modern method of isolation and treatment is adopted.

If the Council are reluctant to try other methods through fear that the cost would be prohibitive the actual amount of money spent on infectious diseases and their prevention is given. £70 is the average amount spent every year for the last 10 years and this does not include money refunded to them by the County Council. Including this £95 is the average annual amount,. The Hospital was used for a period of 60 days during the Smallpox outbreak in 1919 and for a few weeks in 1915. I have no record to show that the Hospital was used at any other time during the past 10 years.

By combining with a neighbouring district with a modern Isolation Hospital the treatment and Isolation of infectious fevers would be available at an initial cost of about £125 per year plus the maintenance of any case beyond 4.

A certain amount of evidence that the cost of this scheme would not be excessive can be deduced from the fact that Bungay have joined with Oulton Broad and the scheme has been running satisfactorily for three years.

In the first year 13 cases were admitted.

"	"	2nd	"	14	"	"	"	
"	"	3rd	"	0	"	"	"	none having been notified.

Several neighbouring districts other than Oulton Broad have modern Isolation Hospitals. Norwich and Yarmouth are both within easy Motor Ambulance distance.

Housing

During the year plans have been approved for the erection of 15 Houses of which 9 are completed and 6 not commenced.

Water Supply

Beccles Water Company supply a hard water of good quality from deep wells on the outskirts of the Town. 1656 (93%) houses have a piped supply.

Sanitary Administration

The Sanitary Inspector reports that complaints were made in connection with 26 houses causing 12 informal and 2 statutory notices to be served, all of which were complied with.

I am,
Sir and Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,

(Signed) C. R. SMITH.

Medical Officer of Health.

The Walk,

Beccles,

Suffolk

5th July 1924.

Report on small outbreak of Typhoid in the Urban district of Beccles in the County of Suffolk.

Beccles is a county town of about 7,000 inhabitants and has two industries employing about 400 persons.

Three individuals were infected during the outbreak. "M" a child of 3½. "C" a girl of 10, and "B" a domestic servant of 30. "M" and "C" were both infected with B Typhus and "B" with paratyphus B. This case was diagnosed at Oulton Broad Isolation Hospital whither she was transferred from her home at Corton Nr. Great Yarmouth. Owing to my absence on a Holiday I have been unable to obtain any details as to her illness and the possible causes from B before she left the district.

The outbreak is resolved to two cases. Both come from a neighbourhood that had suffered severely a few weeks previously from flooding.

Both "M" and "C" had the first symptoms about the Middle of May. "M's" case was mild in type and "C's" severe. Both are now convalescent. Water supply to both houses is from the town main, a good wholesome supply of hard water. The milk supply to the two houses is from entirely different sources involving three vendors. The child "C" is in the habit of eating shell fish obtained from

a shop in the town. The child "M" has never had any shell fish. They both occasionally have ice-cream from a street vendor of whom there are several in Beccles. But it is impossible to be sure at this date if they bought from the same hawker. Owing to the difference in their ages the two children were not in contact at school or at play and were not even acquainted.

Both these cases were treated at home, as no provision for removal to an Isolation Hospital and no special nursing facilities were available.

The best possible home isolation was carried but no special precaution employed.

There is in my opinion no evidence to deduce a faulty water, milk, or food supply, but the fact that both cases occurred after that part of the town had been flooded out after a storm is significant.

Some slight improvement is to be made in the drainage of the area involved which may do something to reduce the floods in the future.

(Sgd.) CHARLES REES SMITH.

M. O. H.

